

**Abstract of the Invention**

**APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CURING  
MATERIALS WITH LIGHT RADIATION**

An instrument and method for curing light-curable compounds in the mouth of a patient, the instrument comprising a housing and a plurality of solid state, light-emitting elements on a substrate supported by the housing. The elements form a collective array on the substrate operable for collectively emitting light having wavelengths within a narrow band of wavelengths.

An optical focusing device is positioned to intercept the light emitted by the array of elements and includes a non-imaging optical device which is operable for collimating the light from the array into a beam to be directed onto a compound for curing the compound. A disposable sleeve covers the housing and array and may incorporate the optical focusing device. The sleeve is removed and discarded after use to eliminate the need to autoclave the instrument.